



# AMERICAN FRONTIER CULTURE FOUNDATION

*Bringing the Past to Life*

*Volume 24, No. 1 Spring 2010*

## Goats Tackle Invasive Plants

Shenandoah Valley landowners are well acquainted with the problem of invasive exotic plants – honeysuckle, tree-of-heaven, autumn olive, garlic mustard and others, which made their way here from Asia and Europe and thrive in the absence of competition or predators. These insidious immigrants use a variety of reproductive and growth strategies to quickly take over our fields, yards and forests. Autumn olive produces abundant berries which birds eat and carry the seeds to new locations. A broad, spreading growth form allows autumn olive and multiflora rose to shade out competing native plants.

Perhaps the most devious survival strategy is allelopathy, where the plant releases chemicals into the surrounding soil that inhibit the growth of other plants. Tree-of-heaven and garlic mustard use allelopathy – along with copious seed production and dispersal - to great success in taking over vast areas.

Unfortunately, heavy infestations of autumn olive, multiflora rose and honeysuckle developed throughout the years on the Museum property and beating these plants requires labor, cash and chemicals. Last summer, help came from an unexpected source; local farmers Clay and Linda Trainum approached the Museum with a proposal to control invasive plants on our extensive open area along the Cochran Parkway. Boer Bok goats would take the place of labor, cash and chemicals. The Trainums' idea was simple: in cooperation with the Shenandoah Resource Conservation & Development Council and the Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation District, they would demonstrate that Boer Bok goats could control invasive plants while producing succulent, nutritious meat.

An agreement between the Frontier Culture Museum and the Trainums took form and surveying began to lay out three plots for defoliation. We mowed fence lanes and the Trainums rolled out an ingenious plastic mesh electric fencing.

At the end of September 2009, approximately seventy handsome brown and white goats arrived in a variety of



*Day 1, South African Boer Bok Goats are a natural replacement for chemicals and herbicides. They eat invasive plant foliage rather than native grasses.*



shapes, sizes and horn configurations. The goats would eat the leaves of the honeysuckle, multiflora rose and autumn olive, ignoring the herbaceous plants and grasses. While mowing or cutting invasive species encourages sprouting and regrowth, this continual defoliation, leaf by leaf, saps the plants' energy and is expected to kill them after two years.

By the time the Boer Boks and their large, woolly and vociferous guard dogs went home in November, the plots were noticeably defoliated. The brown and white goats will return this spring for round two. At the end of the growing season, we will be able to evaluate the success of this project in controlling invasive plants without chemicals. Follow the progress of the Boer Bok goats online at <http://autumnolivefarms.blogspot.com>, a website maintained by Clay and Linda Trainum.

*Day 18, the goats stretch to reach the remaining leaves of invasive plants in the defoliation plot.*



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**In Loving Memory of Helene T. Barger**

The Frontier Culture Museum and American Frontier Culture Foundation mourn the passing of Mrs. Helene T. Barger, a former Foundation Director. Helene was instrumental in the development of many of our farms and played an integral role in the development and success of our German Farm. Our sincerest sympathies are with Helene's family.

**Rebuilding the Tobacco Barn**

When the 1850s American Farm moved to its new site, in preparation for the West African Farm, the tobacco barn, originally constructed during the 1850s, was excluded from the big move. In rebuilding the tobacco barn at the American Farm we are taking a step toward completing our interpretation of the farm.

To aid in the successful rebuild of this historic structure we are asking for assistance from you. Safety is our priority when working with construction machinery and both safety gear and the machinery have been requested for the rebuild. To fulfill these needs, the Foundation is asking for donations to cover the cost of the following items:

2 Chainsaw Chaps, \$120 a piece

2 Chainsaw helmets, \$55 a piece

1 Electric Chainsaw, \$375

If you are able to assist in covering the costs of these items for the rebuild of our historic Tobacco Barn, please make checks payable to AFCF and write 'Tobacco Barn' in the memo line. We are grateful for your support in this endeavor. Your commitment to the Frontier Culture Museum is the essence of our success.

**FRESH FUDGE**

**Free 1/2 lb. fudge**

**When you buy a pound.**

**The Museum Store**

**American Frontier Culture Foundation**



**Call or e-mail Kimi Wills for  
orders and information.**

**540-332-7850**

**[Kim.wills@fcmv.virginia.gov](mailto:Kim.wills@fcmv.virginia.gov)**

**Plan your next special event at the  
Frontier Culture Museum**

Look no further than the Frontier Culture Museum for your special event. A memorable setting, easy access and plenty of parking make this the ideal location to host a reunion, corporate function, wedding, or other occasion. Our facilities are available during the Spring, Summer, and Fall. Leave your guests with wonderful memories in a unique setting.

**Lee S. Cochran Pavilion**

Guests enjoy a panoramic view overlooking the Frontier Culture Museum and the Valley beyond, setting the stage for a truly memorable event.

**Octagonal Barn**

The Octagonal Barn offers a unique barn setting with modern conveniences—kitchen facilities and restrooms. It has been a popular site for smaller weddings, rehearsal dinners and reunions.

For more information, or to reserve Museum facilities,  
contact Gwen Kite at 540-332-7850 or [gwen.kite@fcmv.virginia.gov](mailto:gwen.kite@fcmv.virginia.gov).



# Wool Days April 21-24

For many of us at the Museum, the first sign of spring is the arrival of our first lambs, due at the end of March on the English Farm. The second sign that spring is really here and summer is around the corner is the start of Wool Days, where interpreters shear the majority of our sheep. This year Wool Days are April 21-24. The Museum will shear sheep using traditional hand shears at 11:00 and 2:00 at either the English farm yard or at the 1850s American Farm barn yard. If tradition holds the weather will be really warm when during the shearing and really cold right after, when the sheep have no wool.



*Two of last year's cute baby Cotswold lambs.*



*Sheep shearing on the 1820s American Farm. Shearing simply cuts off the coat of fleece sheep grow for the winter.*

Once the first fleece is removed the interpreters begin processing the wool into thread. The first of many steps is to sort and clean the wool, which will be demonstrated at the English Farm house where the wool is cleaned in hot water and ammonia. Visitors can experience interpreters carding and spinning the wool at the 1820s American Farm while weaving will be demonstrated at the Irish and German Farms. Interpreters on any given farm will demonstrate knitting throughout the week. We also carry local wool in the store.

Wool Days activities are appropriate for all ages and for all of our farms. No matter where you raised sheep, they must be sheared, the wool skirted and cleaned, and then spun into thread.

Visitors will have the opportunity to try many activities during Wool Days: sorting and scouring raw wool; carding and spinning cleaned wool; weaving; quilting on the 1820s American Farm; and the opportunity to touch flax, wool and sheep!

## Time for Summer Camp!

### **In the Good Old Summertime I**

June 14-18

9:30am to noon daily

Experience summertime on the frontier! Campers will have opportunities to take part in many daily and traditional activities of life on the American frontier. This is an introductory camp for younger children (ages 5-8). Cost: \$125 per child

### **In the Good Old Summertime II**

June 21-25

9:30am to noon daily

We're offering a second chance to experience summertime on the frontier! Campers this week will have the same opportunities to take part in the daily and traditional activities of life on the American frontier. This is an introductory camp for younger children (ages 5-8). Cost: \$125 per child

### **Living in the Past**

June 28-July 2

9:30am to 3:00pm daily

How would you survive on the frontier? Campers will have a chance to learn skills and activities needed to survive on the frontier as well as participate in fun and games of the time period. This is an advanced camp for older children (ages 9-12). Cost: \$175 per child

For all camps, we advise campers to wear clothing appropriate for messy and wet outdoor activities. For more information or to register for a camp, please call or e-mail the Frontier Culture Museum at 540-332-7850 or [reservations@fcmv.virginia.gov](mailto:reservations@fcmv.virginia.gov). Information will also be available on our website, [www.frontiermuseum.org](http://www.frontiermuseum.org).

# Upcoming Events

Join us this spring and summer for fun and exciting events at the Frontier Culture Museum!

Hours: March 15 through December 1st, 9:00A.M.– 5:00P.M.

## Wool Days

~ April 21, 22, 23, 24 ~

Join us to experience the wool process from shearing sheep to making thread and weaving fabric. General Admission.

## May Day Festival

~ May 1 ~

Celebrate spring at the Museum with music, dancing, a May Pole, children's activities, plays, and much more!

## Shenandoah Valley Wine Growers Festival

~ June 12 ~

Enjoy a taste of the Shenandoah Valley when the premier winegrowers showcase their award-winning wines.

## In the Good Old Summertime I

Summer Camp June 14-18

## Summer Begins! ~ June 21

## In the Good Old Summertime II

Summer Camp June 21-25

## Craft Beer Festival

~ June 26 ~

Local distributors will showcase their craft beer selections. Enjoy a fun-filled day with plenty of music, food and of course... beer!

## Living in the Past

Summer Camp June 28-July 2

## Independence Day Celebration

~ July 3 ~

Come to the Museum for our Independence Day Celebration! Admission is free and we encourage you to wear your red, white and blue.

## Primitive Technologies Day

~ July 10 ~

Ever wondered how an arrowhead is made? Find out how and much more about a variety of technologies that you don't see every day. General Admission.

For more information about these or any of our special events, please call the Visitors Center at 540-332-7850.

American Frontier Culture Foundation, Inc.



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